Nomination forms for the Crystal Star Awards are now available on our web site.

Top Stories

For too many graduates, the American high school diploma signifies only a broken promise. Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts suggests ways to restore its value. [http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/AmericanDiplomaProject?OpenForm](http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/AmericanDiplomaProject?OpenForm)

Funding Sources


NASSP is inviting proposals from public middle level and high schools serving large numbers of low-income students and underrepresented minorities to apply for a $3,000 mini-grant to implement a school-developed initiative aimed at strengthening ties between the grant recipients’ schools and their students’ neighborhoods and communities. Deadline: April 16, 2004. [http://www.principals.org/awards/bridgebuilders_grant.cfm](http://www.principals.org/awards/bridgebuilders_grant.cfm)

Policy Updates

Mostly rural school systems in at least 12 states are experimenting with a shorter week. [http://www.christiansciencemonitor.com/2004/0323/p03s01-ussc.html](http://www.christiansciencemonitor.com/2004/0323/p03s01-ussc.html)

International Notes
Education secretary launches plans to create an electronic file on every child in England. [http://society.guardian.co.uk/children/story/0,1074,1161932,00.html](http://society.guardian.co.uk/children/story/0,1074,1161932,00.html)

Sex discrimination laws will be amended to allow Australian schools to offer male-only teaching scholarships to redress “gender imbalance.” [http://theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,8923387%255E255E601,00.html](http://theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,8923387%255E255E601,00.html)

Students With Disabilities
The PACER Center has just released a new curriculum on bullying which targets intervention strategies for parents of children with disabilities. [http://www.pacer.org/publications/BullyingFlyer.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/publications/BullyingFlyer.pdf)
The Council of the Great City Schools has prepared the fourth edition of “Beating the Odds” to give the nation another look at how inner-city schools are performing on the academic goals and standards set by the states. [http://www.cgcs.org/reports/beat_the_oddsIV.html](http://www.cgcs.org/reports/beat_the_oddsIV.html)

Research-proven instructional practices, materials, and supports and accommodations can help students with disabilities effectively engage in learning general education curriculum content. [http://208.246.68.104/training_resources/documents/Research-ProvenStrategiesfinal1.doc](http://208.246.68.104/training_resources/documents/Research-ProvenStrategiesfinal1.doc)

**Effective Strategies**

The 15 Effective Strategies have been revised and updated. Please visit our web site ([www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org)) to view the changes.

**Career and Technical Education**


High school students who attend career academies earn higher incomes on average than their peers in other high schools, a new national study reports. [http://www.mdrc.org/publications/366/overview.html](http://www.mdrc.org/publications/366/overview.html)

**Educational Technology**


Schools haven't mastered state-of-art technology; some equipment becomes outdated before teachers can learn to use it. [http://www.dfw.com/mld/startelegram/news/local/8247085.htm](http://www.dfw.com/mld/startelegram/news/local/8247085.htm)


**Family Engagement**

To download a copy of *The Case for Parent Leadership* and view many other parent resources, please visit [http://www.ksaplus.com/ksa/framesplpubs.html](http://www.ksaplus.com/ksa/framesplpubs.html)

Parents often miss warning signs that their teenagers are at risk to drop out of high school, educators warn. [http://desmoinesregister.com/news/stories/c4780927/23672253.html](http://desmoinesregister.com/news/stories/c4780927/23672253.html)

This useful article that may help parents alleviate students' test anxiety. [http://cresst.org/resources/justforparents/HelpYourChildonTests_010804.doc](http://cresst.org/resources/justforparents/HelpYourChildonTests_010804.doc)

**Resources & Tools**

*Focus on the Wonder Years - Challenges Facing the American Middle School* questions the value of middle schools. [http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG139/](http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG139/)

A new study by Brigham Young University suggests that summer school has lasting effects for younger elementary students. [http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,595050657,00.html](http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,595050657,00.html)

This is an excellent article on the impact of immigration on schools and students. [http://www.principals.org/publications/pl/pl_world_immigrant_students_0304.cfm](http://www.principals.org/publications/pl/pl_world_immigrant_students_0304.cfm)

We appreciate comments from our readers. Please contact us at ndpc@clemson.edu Sources: Access Center, ECS, EDNews, Commentaries, & Reports, ENC, eSn, Middle Web, PEN Weekly, RFP Bulletin, SMHP